

VZCZCXYZ0003
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHEG #1228 1671123
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 151123Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9552
INFO RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 001228

SIPDIS

NSC FOR PASCUAL, DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA AND DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/12/2018

TAGS: [SOCI](#) [KIRF](#) [PHUM](#) [KISL](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: MUFTI'S VIEWS ON RECENT SECTARIAN INCIDENTS

REF: A. CAIRO 1111
 [B.](#) CAIRO 1193

Classified By: Ambassador Margaret Scobey, for reason 1.4 (d).

(C) In a June 10 introductory call, Mufti of the Republic Ali Goma'a told the Ambassador that in the wake of some recent sectarian incidents (reftels), he is working hard to focus Egyptians on the concept of citizenship. "In meetings, articles, TV interviews, and my Friday sermons, my staff and I are working to focus Egyptians on the notion that, Muslim or Christian, we are all Egyptians, living together under the same constitution and the same laws." Comparing Egypt's inter-religious friction with 1960's racial tensions in the U.S., the Mufti commented that, "this is a tense period now that we will pass through, just as the U.S. passed through a similar experience." With regard to the land dispute surrounding the Abu Sana monastery that sparked recent violence (reftels), the Mufti asserted that the land the monastery is attempting to build a wall around belongs neither to the monastery nor the Muslim villagers, but to the Egyptian state. He faulted both the Copts and Muslims for trying to claim the land for their own use, and opined that the state should have stepped in to assert its ownership and calm tensions. (Note: Coptic contacts have confirmed that the land belongs to the state, and that no court has ever ruled that it should belong either to the monastery or to villagers. End note).

SCOBAY